The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

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December.

Nay, no closed doors for me,
But open doors and open hearts and glee
To welcome young and old.

Dimmest and brightest month am I;
My short days end, my lengthening days begin;
What matters more or less seen in the sky,
When all is seen within?

Ivy and privet dark as night,
I weave with hips and haws a cheerful show,
And holly for a beauty and delight,
And milky mistletoe.

While high above them all I set
Yew twigs and Christmas roses pure and pale;
Then Spring, her snowdrop and her violet,
May keep so sweet and frail;

May keep each merry, singing bird
Of all her happy birds that singing build;
For I've a carol which some shepherds heard
Once in a wintry field.—CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

Of the poor bird that cannot fly
Kindly you think and mournfully;
For prisoners and for exiles all
You let the tears of pity fall.
And very true the grief should be
That mourns the bondage of the free.

The soul—*she* has a fatherland:
Binds *her* not many a tyrant's hand?
And the winged spirit has a home,
But can she always homeward come?
Poor souls, with all their wounds and foes,
Will you not also pity those?

A Christmas Sermon.

BY THE REV. H. GOW, B.A.

"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men of good will."

We keep the birthdays of earthly potentates with drums and trumpets and flags and military display. But the birthday of Jesus Christ we keep, not with flags and loud noises and martial methods, but by a spirit of kindness and of love. We decorate with evergreens and with holly berries, which are types of the power of the human spirit to be bright and beautiful and full of life in the gloomiest and most wintry period of all the year. In spite of winds and storms and frost, the holly bears its ruddy berries shining through the snow, and the ivy wears its bright green leaves unharmed.

They are types of a strong, sweet, happy life not dependent upon warmth and sunshine, which shines forth in all its beauty amidst the trials and storms of adversity. In remembering the life of Jesus to-day, in thanking God for it, we remember it as the life of one who was supremely strong and peaceful and serene, because his heart was pure, because he lived so near to God, and because he was so certain that love was the essential reality in life and death.

Christmas Day is an appeal to all of us to

be happy, thankful, and full of confidence in God's love. It is an appeal to which few can be wholly deaf. Old and young, sorrowful and glad, the spirit of the time can hardly fail to touch us all. It would be a grievous thing that any man or woman should have to say, "Christmas means nothing to me now. I am too old, too sad, too lonely, or too sorely tried. I remember how I used to enjoy it as a child, but that only makes me sadder as I remember the old Christmases to-day."

We cannot, indeed, all enjoy ourselves with the keen, merry excitement of children, and if Christmas joy must necessarily mean this, then we may feel that it is not for us. But it does not necessarily mean a forced hilarity nor a joy that is out of harmony with death, although it is essentially the joy of little children to whom death is unreal, and to whom love and kindness are the great realities in life. We may all have that part of Christmas happiness which comes from giving other people pleasure. It is an unrivalled opportunity for giving unasked for and unexpected pleasures to friends or strangers. The delight is great in giving to those we love, because it is a sign of an affection which we find it so difficult to express in ordinary times. We are an undemonstrative people, not saying much about our deepest feelings, and I think that we are right. It is good to reverence our feelings, and not to talk about them lightly. It is good to be strong and reserved and silent about much. Deep feelings are best made known by a look, a tone, a touch, and not by many words. There ought to be more in our hearts than we can ever speak out.

"I were but little happy, if I could say how much," and that thought of Shakespeare is even more true of love than happiness. But it is a great pleasure at Christmas time to be able to express through the symbolism of presents, the love we feel for our relations and our friends.

And it is not only within the circle of family and intimates that such pleasures can be found. We can all gain the Christmas joy which comes from giving happiness by discovering a few children or poor people, or some disappointed or obscure person, and surprising them with a wholly unexpected gift.

That can hardly be done at any other season of the year in the same natural, easy way. It can be done now, not as a dole, but as the outcome of kind thoughts, giving pleasure to those who did not know we cared for them. Such a little thought, a little money, a little effort, will give surprise and joy in households where it is not expected.

There ought to be an interesting brown paper parcel brought to every child in our city. It opens fairyland before him; it does more than this, it gives a child a sense of the beneficence of the unknown. He has felt the love of parents and of friends; but through such gifts from strangers he feels a large, vague love, the kindness of the world, which helps him to realise the love of God. We talk much of the hardness of the world; after all, you and I help to make that world, and form an essential part of it. The pleasure of giving to children consists, as Sydney Smith has said, in the fact that "if we make them happy now, we shall make them happy twenty years after by the memory of it." To give a child happiness at Christmas time is to give him something which will come back to him from time to time as a sweet and fragrant memory all his life. We are none of us too old or sad to give little children pleasure, and such acts help to unseal the springs of happiness within our hearts.

But there is more in Christmas joy than giving pleasure. Parents and children, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, lovers and friends, will feel the beauty and sacredness of home relationships. We feel how much the lives of those we love mean to us, we feel how much our lives, however insignificant, mean to them. We rejoice in one another's love and rest peacefully in it, feeling what a refuge and strength it is, what a call to work, what a reason for gratitude. Into that home gathering we bring also in our thoughts those who are far away and those who have passed into the unseen land. To the childlike Christmas spirit the feeling of Wordsworth's little cottage girl is the natural one. We can still say "we are seven," although two have disappeared from sight. In this forgetfulness of self, in the consciousness of the love revealed through Christ, we have the quiet, deep joy which is at the heart of life and death, and feel at peace. We are not afraid of anything, and realise we are one family on earth and in heaven. If we would enter into the spirit of Christmas we must become as little children. That is a beautiful and too rare experience in which we not only remember the incidents of our child-

hood, but enter into its atmosphere and peace. We want to put away from us the eager fretfulness and anxiety, the intellectual doubts, the ambitions and strife of daily work. We want to forget the misunderstandings, the unkindness, the hard thoughts, which do so much to hide the goodness of human natures from us. We want to live in the moment, and to be alive to all that is good and beautiful. In the men whom we remember with most admiration and affection there is always a childlike quality. With all their strength and talent and earnest striving they have a trustful simplicity of character and spirit. It is not mainly through intellectual questioning and cleverness of thought that they resolve the doubts and difficulties which meet us all. It is not merely by reasoning that they bring comfort and peace to the weary and heavy-laden. They show forth the goodness and the beauty of this earth and human nature, not by logic, but by life, by the affection which they feel and which they inspire by their sympathy, their faithfulness, their love.

It is in the spirit and the faith of Jesus that we feel this serenity most deeply. He brought life and immortality to life. We keep the festival of his birthday by entering into his spirit of love, joy, peace, with his unconquerable faith in the goodness of life, the goodness of death.

The Steadfast Ones.

Every cause, institution, and good work of every kind, which brings no return in money, in honour, or in social rewards, depends for its success upon the voluntary and steadfast service of a few men and women. They consider the meetings, or their assignments to duty, in behalf of the cause to which they profess loyalty, as standing engagements, positive appointments, which they do not think of neglecting. When the hour arrives for them to be on duty, they let no considerations of comfort, convenience, personal preference, or health even, serve as an excuse for neglecting duty. By the labours of such men and women, good causes thrive; and these workers, through the habits they form and the good deeds set to their credit, become trusty and influential members not only of the organisations they serve, but also of the community in which they live.

There is another class of people whose intentions are good, whose sentiments are praiseworthy, and whose influence can always be counted upon when good things are to be done or evil things are to be resisted. But, when the committees are to be appointed or are to be summoned for duty, then excuses are plentiful. It wasn't convenient, it wasn't pleasant; it required some risk of health or comfort to do the duty at the right time and place, and, therefore, they were absent. Jesus did not go far in his ministry before He encountered this class. The parable is familiar. Why does it not take effect? Why do not men and women stop to think about themselves, when they are making ready excuses, and say, "If Jesus were here, He would select me as one of those who had bought a farm, or married a wife, or was trying a yoke of oxen, and, therefore, could not hear the summons of the Lord of heaven and earth, and was not ready to do the work at the time and place when only it could be done by me."

It is not in matters of religion alone that this law holds good, and that the line is sharply drawn between the whole-hearted and the half-hearted in matters which require personal service. It is so in politics and civil government. The line is drawn among those who work for education, ideals of art, literature, and poetry. Some men and women hear the summons, and unconsciously reply, "Here am I, Lord," and are so possessed with the spirit of the call and the need of obedience that trivial excuses do not even suggest themselves to the mind. They are like a hungry man going to a meal that has been postponed, who does not let trifling obstacles, unimportant attractions, or even the demands of business and the calls of friendship, stand between him and the duty and desire which fill his mind. He has something to do that is to be done, both because it is important to his health and his efficiency, and because it draws him. If we may say so, his heart is in it,—if not his heart, then that which lies very near to it and is the source of his physical strength and well-being. He who has higher desires, nobler appetites, a pressing moral and spiritual hunger, will find himself drawn and driven to his duty and opportunity in a similar way.

The pity of it is that, when one states an

evident truth of this kind, they who take it to themselves and lay a new burden upon their hearts and consciences are those who are already overwrought in feeling and overworked in practice. They long to do so much, they can accomplish so little, that they are driven by the gadfly of their own fidelity into self-reproach and self-condemnation, while those who need the chiding and deserve the warning still go on under the habit of making excuses, and let the warning pass. But this is to be said, whether they will hear or forbear, that the better day for the nation, the school, the church, for society and the family, is coming, partly because they look in the right direction, but mainly because there are those who, without excuse, make themselves the instruments of carrying out the will of God, which by these other good people is heartily approved, but by whom it is never wholly done.

The Place of Fear in Religion.

"The beginning of wisdom is Fear of the Eternal."

I fear God, says Sir Thomas Browne, *but I am not afraid of him.* His words are: "I thank God, and with joy I mention it, I was never afraid of hell, nor never grew pale at the description of that place. . . . That terrible term hath never detained me from sin, nor do I owe any good action to the name thereof. I fear God, yet am not afraid of him. (*Religio Medici*, Part I.)

These are brave words to have been written, as they were, amidst the angry controversies of two hundred and forty years ago. And that, it seems to me, is exactly the attitude of a sound and manly mind toward the highest, deepest, greatest Power that our minds can conceive. The feeling has nothing to do, necessarily, with the distinctness with which we can think of the Almighty as a sovereign Judge, exercising judgment in his own person. That turns on an act of the imagination, or else on a point of philosophical speculation, which, the more we think of it, seems the more impossible to grasp. Simonides, as Cicero tells us, was once asked by Hiero of Syracuse—the man of high genius by the crafty statesman—to give his opinion about the Divine Nature. He asked a day to consider of it; then two days, then four, and so on, still doubling the time; and at last gave it up as wholly beyond the power of the mind to fathom. That is, in brief, the story of all human speculation about the nature and attributes of Infinite Force. It is not thought, but emotion, with which the human mind can contemplate the attributes of Deity. That emotion, at its highest, is a serene and unfaltering trust in infinite Goodness. But, at its deepest, it must always be a profound awe, a religious fear. To think of the lightning flash and the thunder-storm, the cataract, the earthquake, and the tornado; to think of the appalling speed with which this vast globe of earth is hurled along in its orbit—twenty miles in a second, more than a hundred times as fast as the ball from a cannon; to think of the mere change of seasons, and that shifting wave of life that follows the sun's declination, now north, now south, with the amazing phenomena borne along upon it,—six months' flow and six months' ebb; to think of the wonder and terror, the passion and storm, that sweep across the narrow track of our own life on this terrestrial ball; and then, having thought of these, to take one glance, awestruck, at the spangled depths of the sky, above us and around, to remember that, in all this universe of wonder, glory, and dread, we have seen, as it were, but the fringes of the garment in which the Almighty wraps himself from our view| because (as the ancients thought) no mortal could behold that unutterable splendour and live,—to think of all this, I say, it does not appear as if "the fear of the Lord" were likely ever to cease, as the real basis of the emotion that lifts us toward the Eternal. Take what shape it may, enlightened and lifted up as you will above the old slavish terror, it remains "the beginning of wisdom" to us all.

The scientific habit of the present day is to look back a good way to the origin of our emotions; to trace the development of them through many stages of animal life; and, for the sake of understanding better our morals and religion, to take our lessons from the naturalist.

I was travelling once with a very intelligent geologist, a man familiar with the philosophy of evolution; and he remarked upon this fact—that the ordinary condition of almost every

animal, in a state of nature, is what he called a *condition of flight*. When it is not seeking its own food,—that is, fighting outright starvation,—it is generally straining its faculties to escape some one of the powerful, fleet, cunning enemies that seek it for their prey. The instant it falters in its powers of flight it is struck down. This is what naturalists call the "struggle for existence." Sometimes we speak of it as the cruelty of Nature. And, in fact, it makes the ground of the argument by which some recent philosophers dispute a benevolent purpose in creation. But, if we only think of it a moment, it is rather the mercy and tenderness of Nature. "Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your Father." That is Nature's way—I venture to say the only way we can possibly conceive, if animal life as we understand it is to exist at all—of removing the lame, the bruised, the sickly, the old, from the crowded ranks of life, and so escaping the accumulation of helpless misery, and keeping up the fresh vigour of animal existence. In this range of being the race is to the swift and the battle to the strong. Any hesitation in the Lord of Nature, any weak compassion here, would multiply many times over the misery it seemed to check. The inexorable, the inevitable, the most merciful law is the universal struggle for existence, and survival of the fittest.

So far the naturalist. But the thing to be taken note of by the religious moralist is this: that the higher faculties of the creature—its strength, its skill, its swiftness—owe their very creation to this race for life, which makes its existence one long "condition of flight." The miraculous darting speed of a fish in the water, the strange writhing of a snake in the grass, the easy poise and amazing convolutions of a swallow on the wing, the slender grace and swiftness of a deer or greyhound, the almost human sagacity of the elephant,—all these, if we stop to think of it, are not (in our modern view) gifts outright made by the Creator to his creatures. They are faculties slowly evolved in that long process, through countless generations. And of them all the strongest motive, or impelling force, is that haunting fear which makes the creature's life so largely a condition of flight.

Take away that fear, and the incessant training of every higher faculty which it compels, and you have—what? Fishes, such as swim lazily round in a glass tank; wild beasts, miserable, diseased, and discontent, as you see them in a menagerie; birds as you find them petted and pining in cages; pampered dogs, with all the faults of spoilt children, and even less chance to mend, for lack of any deep spiritual ground of moral life in them. In short, without that wholesome element of terror, without that stimulating condition of flight, all the free, wild, picturesque life, all that keen, healthy faculty of enjoyment in the animal creation perishes; and, out of mere inanition and atrophy of its higher powers, it begins inevitably to lapse back to the condition of those dull, stupid, lumpish creatures, that wallowed in the slime ages before man was born.

Now, it is just as true of a man as it is of any other creature, that his higher faculties always need the stimulus of a wholesome fear. To begin with, man's life is a battle with the elements. His natural enemies are storm, hunger, accident, ague, fever, frost. In such rude habitation as he can find or frame, he is in a state of siege from wild animals stronger, swifter, and fiercer than he,—the bear of the wood, the tiger of the jungle, the wolf of the plain, the snake in the grass, the dragon of the swamp, the vulture of the sky. Look back on the beginnings of human life on earth; and instead of the fair garden of Eden innocence as Milton pictures it, watered and bounded by its four pleasant rivers, and with beasts that neither raven, rage, nor howl,—a manifest allegory of the moral life of man, a mere late dream of Oriental poetry—you find a condition so squalid, so pitiful, so gross, so beset with violences and fears, that only by a strong effort of imagination can we think of it as the state out of which our civilization, order, and intelligence have actually grown.

It may be that the mental endowment of the earliest men, at least of the superior race from which we claim to be descended, was something higher than would seem on the surface. It is hard to imagine, otherwise, how that wretched life, beset by so many enemies, could have continued at all, to serve as the basis the immense advance that has been effecte since. But the particular thing to be observed about it is this: that every step of that advance

was made under the direct pressure and goad of some form of fear,—at least until pure intellect could get on its feet, and unfold itself independently, as in abstract learning and pure science and fine art, by its own laws or to serve its own delights.

Or take our condition now, with such vast accumulations of wealth, power, and skill as we have inherited from the past. Are we yet delivered from the pressure of the motive of a similar fear? I think not. What is our best engineering skill, but equipment for our conflict with the terrors of storm and flood and ocean wave? What is all our medical science, but a life-battle with pain and pestilence and inborn dread of death? Sometimes the great dread will be sprung upon us all at once (as it was thirty years ago) of losing at one stroke that unspeakable treasure and gain which we sum up in the ideal unity of the State; and suddenly we come to the consciousness of a new range of faculties and a new source of strength,—very much (to compare a great thing with a small) like what a young eagle must feel when a rattle-snake frightens him from his perch, and he trusts for the first time the power of his own wings in flight.

But in quieter times, what is it we are honestly, healthily, usefully afraid of? The poor, of more galling poverty. The poorest, of outright starvation. The richer, of loosing what they have. The man in business, of loss or bankruptcy. Those of somewhat higher but insecure position, of the loss of caste, security, comfort, social standing. The energy and hope that make our limbs to walk and our wings to fly are set off over against that background; their bright is relieved against the shadow of that besetting fear.

I put all this on a very low level. It is best to start so. And I say that this meaner fear is necessary to the developing and sustaining of our higher faculties,—if not the highest, at least our working, executive faculties. The mere shelter, for a single generation, from what we call "the healthy stimulus of prospective want" generally, as we see, incapacitates a rich man's children, at any rate his grand-children, from having skill or self-command or foresight enough so much as to keep the wealth he leaves them. The faculty, it would seem, can only grow, can only be maintained, like forests, on a hillside, by the actual beating of rainstorms and wrestling with the stress of wind.

There is no time to follow out these forms of natural dread, nor is there need. We only wish to see how that motive of fear plays its part in the unfolding of the higher life. For "the terror of the Lord," in the old theological sense, has faded almost wholly away from the cultivated mind of our generation. That we cannot help. It is no fault of ours that it has come to be so; it is no use our trying to revive it. But it is a matter of very great consequence what emotion, or what class of emotions, may come to occupy its place. A blank defiance of the moral laws of the universe—what goes in life by the name of practical atheism, or in politics by the name of anarchism—is very much worse, in its effect on character and human welfare, than the fear which it derides as superstitious. And we are not much better off, when we find ourselves on the level of those mean and sordid fears which common life is apt to generate.

The old religious terror has left to our inheriting a name which has not yet lost all its appalling significance. Let us think, one minute, of that name.

"Hell [says Carlyle] generally signifies the Infinite Terror, the thing a man is infinitely afraid of, and shudders, and shrinks from, struggling with his whole soul to escape from it. There is a hell, therefore, [he goes on to say] which accompanies a man in all stages of his history and religious or other development; but the hells of men and peoples differ notably. With Christians, it is the infinite terror of being found guilty before the just Judge. With old Romans it was the terror not of Pluto, for whom probably they cared little; but of doing unworthily, doing unvirtuously, which was their word for unmanfully. And now, what is it [he asks], if you pierce through his cants, his oft-repeated hearsays, what he calls his worships, and so forth,—what is it that the modern English soul does in truth dread infinitely, and contemplate with entire despair? What is his hell—after all those reputable oft-repeated hearsays,—what is it? With hesitation, with astonishment, I pronounce it to be the terror of not succeeding; of not making money, fame, or some other figure in the world,—chiefly, of not making money. Is not that [he asks] a somewhat singular hell?"

"Better than none," we might reply. Better than none. It is very important indeed that there should be some fear, some terror at something, to push men on, to shore them up, so that they shall not lapse back into mere

helpless indolence, indigence, idiotism, or despair. We think it a great matter when a young man, after his wild, idle, or sentimental years, distinctly conceives such an aim in life as to make a fortune, to distinguish himself, to achieve an honest independence, spurred on by the healthy stimulus of prospective want. We think it a great matter when a reckless spendthrift or drunkard distinctly conceives a motive even so low as a mere selfish prudence,—dread of beggary, perhaps, or of delirium tremens,—still more, if he conceives a motive so high as a generous ambition, that can lift him out of the slough and the ruts of a wasted life, and make him in some way a help to other men, at least to his own wife and children, and no longer a burden and drag upon them. By all means let us do justice to any motive that will keep men from wallowing in the slime of mere sensuality, or sliding into sheer recklessness and despair. After all, this modern hell, at which Carlyle flings his sharp sarcasm, is not so much worse than some of the ancient ones.

* * * * * * *

The opinion we hold is simply and only this: that sin—that is, any evil thing willingly harboured in the soul, is like a poison in the blood, which brings fever and suffering *because it is a poison, and not as a punishment for being poisoned;* and there is no such thing as pardon except getting out the poison, and no such thing as salvation except restoring the health. This is the only doctrine about it which I profess, or have any pretension to understand. And in this view of it, it does not make the slightest difference, as to the motive we appeal to, whether life is longer or shorter —whether it ends on earth or continues to all eternity: our business is to get rid of the poison. And that poison, or the torment of it, is what we mean by hell.

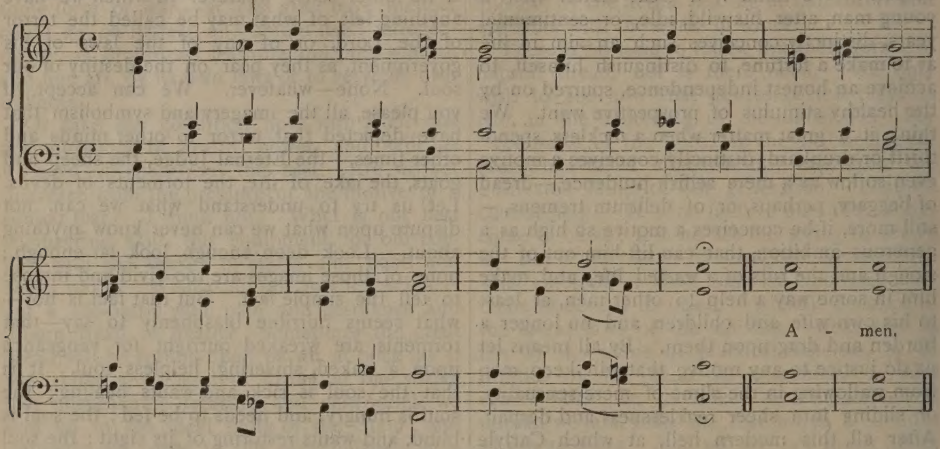
Now this poison—the poison of vileness and degradation of character, the poison of corruption and disorder in the body politic—is what I am very much afraid of. It is that particular "terror of the Lord" which, as I hold, can have a very real meaning to us, here and now. So far from fading out as men grow more thoughtful, more intelligent, more moral, it appears to me that this real and wholesome fear must become more living, powerful, and keen. I have not the least hesitation in saying that there is no other sense whatever in which we have anything left of what may be called the terror of the Lord, or of any of the laws of his government, as they bear on the destiny of our soul. None—whatever. We can accept, if you please, all the imagery and symbolism that have depicted that terror to other minds and other times,—the Eternal Judge, the sheep and goats, the lake of fire, the torments of devils. Let us try to understand what we can, not dispute upon what we can never know anything about. Look deep enough, look far enough: none of those images are too vivid and intense to tell the simple fact. But that fact is not—what seems horrible blasphemy to say—that torments are wreaked outright for vengeance upon a naked, shivering, helpless soul. It is that the soul is sick, and wants healing; the soul is hungry, and needs to be fed; the soul is blind, and wants restoring of its sight; the soul is fevered with the poison in its veins, which needs to be eradicated; the soul is well nigh dead, and must be brought to life again.

This hospital imagery does well enough to hint the terror. But the reality of it is found, when we have seen for ourselves, as Shakespeare saw, the baffled thirst of selfish ambition; the insatiable jealousy and envy; the dull stupidity; the sharp malignity; the impotent lust; the gains that have no pleasure in them; the remorse of wasted opportunity; the craving of passion that can never be content. When we have seen these things we have seen a living soul in hell. The fires of that hell smoulder underneath many a smooth surface, and behind many a polished mask. That is the hell for us to fear! "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Again I say: Be not afraid of them which kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear. Fear Him"—not as we must understand it now, not the good God, but the spirit of evil, the enemy of God—which after he hath killed, —when courage is dead, when hope is dead, when all is gone that made life worth the living, —hath power to cast into the hell of black despair! Yea, I say unto you, fear Him!

J. H. Allen

A Christmas Hymn.

SIMEON. 7.7.7.4. GRANVILLE BANTOCK.



1. THROUGH the starry midnight dim
O'er the hills of Bethlehem,
Sweetly rang the angel hymn,
Hallelujah.

2. And the shepherds who their sheep
Kept among the meadows steep,
Feared, but soon had joy as deep,
Hallelujah.

3. "Fear not," cried the angel bright,
"There is born to you this night
A Saviour, Jesus, King of Light."
Hallelujah.

4. "He is Christ the Lord; arise,
Seek him where he lowly lies,
In a manger hid from eyes."
Hallelujah.

5. Joyful was the shepherd clan
When the Gospel tidings ran:
"Peace on earth, goodwill to man."
Hallelujah.

6. And all Heaven at the word,
Sang aloud—"O be adored,
In the highest, God the Lord,"
Hallelujah.

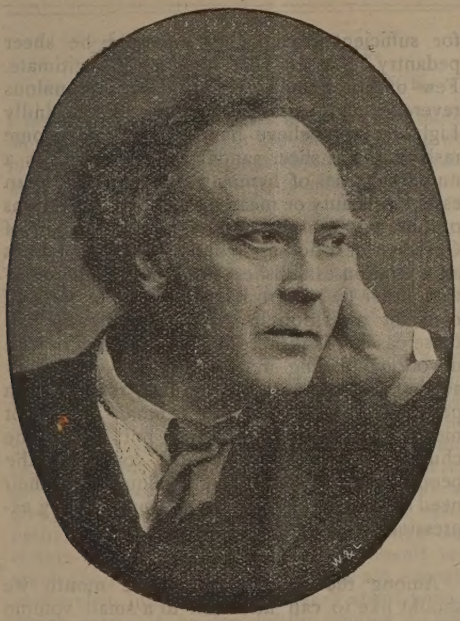
STOPFORD A. BROOKE.

Our Hymn Writers.

IV.

REV. STOPFORD A. BROOKE, M.A.

Mr. Brooke needs no introduction to the readers of *The Seed Sower*. As a preacher, as a poet, as a critic, he is known by the English-speaking race the world over. To our own Free Churches he is especially dear. His enthusiasm, his Catholic sympathies, his broad humanity, coupled with a very wonderful style, as full of beauty as of strength, have given him a great hold upon our fellowship. We can never forget what a tremendous sacrifice he made for truth and conscience in forsaking the Established Church and allying himself with the cause of freedom and progressive theology. Yet his sermons are not the property of a sect; the whole Christian Church claims them for edification, while in his hymns he has shewn how the true and devout poet rises above all dogmatic barriers and gives expression to those universal aspirations, emotions, ideas and experiences which find an echo in every heart. It is not too much to say that of all living hymn writers Mr. Brooke is easily first. It is unsafe to prophesy about the future of our hymns, but we are quite sure that no modern hymns are more certain of a long life than those of Mr. Brooke. We have pleasure in



REV. STOPFORD A. BROOKE, M.A.

giving our readers a very beautiful setting by Mr. Granville Bantock of Mr. Brooke's Christmas hymn.

Who's Who tells us that Mr. Brooke was born in Ireland in 1832, that he was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, where he won the Downe's Divinity prize, the Vice-Chancellor's prize for English Verse, that he was ordained in 1857, and was for two years Chaplain to the Princess Royal, at Berlin. He was also one of the Queen's Honorary Chaplains. There are many who look back to his ministry, first at St. James' and then at Bedford Chapels, with immense gratitude. He first came into public notice by his *Life of F. W. Robertson*, of Brighton, one of the best biographies of the 19th century, and a book that had a remarkable influence on the thought of the time. The many volumes of his sermons have carried his teaching far and wide, while his studies in Tennyson and Browning, and his lectures and books on the English poets, have given him the highest place in that criticism which is not only interpretative and illuminating, but which is an original and creative force in literature. May he long continue to instruct and delight a generation which has come to regard him with the honour due to a prophet and the affection given to a friend.

Notes and Jottings.

The Church crisis in Scotland still continues, and as the recent legal decision takes effect in the transference of property to the victors the bitterness increases. On the whole the defeated majority has behaved with dignity and wisdom, and under great provocation has left violent language to the other side. At the same time there is little justification for the popular idea that the decision is unfair and absurd. Many of the liberal men in the Free Church of Scotland, as elsewhere, have been in a false position for a long time, and the plea that property can be tied up by specific doctrinal trusts and indefinite room be left for change and growth is quite as contradictory to common sense as it is to the legal mind. It would be better to acknowledge frankly that it is not the law which is oppressive, but the former policy of the church which was wrong. It is from themselves and their own ecclesiastical tradition that the majority of the old Free Church is seeking to be delivered.

The conception of the Church as a living spiritual society, with an inherent power of growth and adoption, has all the charm of novelty in Protestant circles. That it is profoundly true and likely to have a far-reaching influence in the future we firmly believe; but it is the negation of the traditional idea of orthodoxy as belief in an unchanging creed. So far we have seen hardly any practical suggestions of the way in which it should be applied to the present difficulty. Are the men who plead with such eloquence that the living organism must not be crippled by the dead hand prepared to embrace all the consequences of their own words? Or will they be content with a policy of accommodation and a fresh doctrinal scheme, forgetful that they are in no better position to settle the essentials of the

faith than were the men of sixty years ago, who believed in the extreme doctrine of predestination, which is the cause of so much of the present difficulty?

In the ordinances of the mediæval Gild of the Lord's Prayer at York, a provision occurs which is remarkable in its foresight and tolerance. It is worth the attention of all who desire in drawing up trust deeds and articles of association to legislate for the present without placing fetters upon the future. It is as follows: "Whensoever, and as often soever as it may perchance happen, that we or our successors, wardens and brethren of this Gild, may become wiser than we now are, none of us nor our successors shall be deemed a rebel, or as standing out against our wishes or against those of any of our successors, if haply we put forth, or there shall be put forth at any time hereafter, any new ordinance that will be for the greater glory of God or the welfare of this Gild."

The issue of a new and revised edition of Hymns Ancient and Modern has aroused a great deal of interest and some adverse criticism. It is a remarkable testimony to the fact that the English are a hymn singing people. In spite of its rather poor literary quality Hymns Ancient and Modern has done for the Church of England and the more educated portion of the community what the hymns of the Wesleys did for early Methodism, or Moody and Sankey for modern evangelical missions. It has given it voice and a song. People always object to changes, even for the better, where their sentiments are strongly engaged, and the new edition is not likely to be judged entirely upon its merits in many quarters. Good judges say that it has but been improved by a severe purging of sentimentality, both in words and music. This shows a healthy taste, and should be welcomed by all who value strength and simplicity in religious expression.

Of some of the alterations in the text of familiar hymns the editors are not likely to hear the last for some time. A nice point of literary morality is involved in the practice of altering hymns to suit individual taste or the varying shades of theological opinion. It requires always to be done with judgment and for sufficient reason, but it would be sheer pedantry to assert that it is never legitimate. Few of our hymns are entitled to scrupulous reverence as literature. To alter "Lead kindly Light," as we believe has been done by some rash editor, is sheer vandalism; but there is a numerous class of hymns which lose nothing in essential beauty or meaning by slight alterations of phrase, and in these cases the needs of Christian devotion are paramount. Sometimes an alteration establishes itself in popular affection either by its own happy skill or by force of constant repetition in public worship, and in these cases it is rather foolish to interfere with devotional feeling in the interests of literary accuracy. After all the ordinary reviewer is a poor judge of the value of a hymnal. It is not meant to be read in the study but sung in the church. The real verdict must come from the people who use it. Is it adequate to their need? Does it provide noble and stately expression for their religious emotion?

Among the new books of the month we should like to call attention to a small volume by the Bishop of Winchester on Holy Scripture and Criticism. It is a collection of miscellaneous papers and sermons, with the underlying thought that religion has nothing to fear from the use of the most consistent application of literary criticism and the laws of evidence to the Old Testament. Dr. Ryle's teaching is that the revelation in the Old Testament, being a revelation through the progressive unfolding of the life of the nation, is absolutely unaffected by critical difficulties in regard to some of the documents. He does not pursue the subject into the New Testament, but there an analogous argument may be used. The New Testament revelation does not depend for its value upon the view which we take of particular events or the authorship of its different writings. It is a revelation given through a life and character which is stamped clearly upon the whole literature. The impression produced is one which is unaffected by critical doubts or unsolved difficulties of detail. We cannot conceive of a time when the New Testament will cease to be a convincing witness to the character and influence of Christ and his spiritual power in the world.

The Christmas Gift.

By REV. JOHN WHITE CHADWICK.

Emerson's essay on Gifts is as good a lamp as we can hold close to our breasts when we plunge into the tremendous cloud of Christmas giving. His first rule is necessity: that, if our friend is much in need of shoes, we should not give him a paint-box; yet I would say, something besides the shoes, something indifferent to his pressing wants, as if he were as well off as the best. His next rule is that the gift should pertain to one's self, and be something that represents our own life and character, and not merely the jeweller's or some other's of that kind. Here women seem to be more fortunate than men, there are so many pretty things that they can make. The minister's sermon or the lawyer's brief would be a doubtful gift. But, while it is good to give one's own handiwork, it is not so bad to give anything that is ours through vital sympathy and appreciation. Even here there are certain limitations. Doubtless we consult too much the taste of the recipient and not enough of our own, but there is a proverb about pearls which may not be too loftily ignored. Nor need our hesitation about giving this or that to a particular friend be any imputation of defect. A set of Browning would be as absurd for some folk as a refrigerator to a Laplander, but they may like Herbert Spencer well enough. My dear Laura may disdain George Meredith, but she may like Jane Austen passing well; and who shall say that in such instances Wisdom is not justified of her children? It would be as perverse to give anybody's poems to a friend who dislikes all poetry as to give a box of fine cigars to a friend who never smokes.

One thing seems very sure: there must be no element of bargaining in our Christmas giving. There is much giving and taking which yields no adequate result. Better would be accomplished if either party gave nothing, but laid out his money for himself in a judicious way. It would save pack-thread and postage. Arrest yourself if you find yourself saying, "Such a one remembered me last year, and now I must remember him." The reciprocity of Confucius or McKinley does not extend its rule to Christmas gifts. It is a mean business when we find ourselves sorry over the gift we have received because we have sent nothing corresponding, and we hurry off to buy something, and send it, hoping our tardiness will not breed suspicion. So far as the Christmas spirit is concerned, we might as well send along the cash. Moreover, it is shameful to regret the little gift received where something larger has been sent, and equally so to regret what we have given, as if it could be shamed by the reciprocal event. To enter into the joy of Christmas giving with any of these sordid thoughts is to invade the wedding feast without a wedding garment. Shall we love those only who first love us? "If I love you," said Goethe, "what is that to you?" That is a very doubtful Christmas into which there does not enter a great deal of doing good, hoping for nothing again, and much gladness in this aspect of the time.

I would recommend the rotary Christmas as a good institution and worthy of wide acceptation. I mean that there is no good reason why we should not pass our gifts along.

"God wills that in a ring
His blessings should be sent."

The gift once given is ours; and, though the silversmith or bookseller might object to our sending it on some new errand of love, the giver certainly should not. Of course, the money-saving element in such an economy may be too prominent; but, where there is much love and little money, it may have its proper place. It may be a good habit not to write your child's name and your own in his Christmas book, so that, if he wishes to pass it along next Christmas, he may do so with less hindrance; but I am inclined to think that there is something of base concession here, and that the book ought to acquire value from its history. To pass along the thing for which we do not care is something base, or would be, were it not for the wide difference in tastes and needs. But, if Tom should feel constrained to give away his very dearest book, and Maggie hers, the genius of the happy time would smile upon the act.

I do not imagine that the little Jesus had many Christmas presents even supposing (not to be too critical) that the day was his birthday, as folk commonly believe. But I think he got along without them very well. For one thing, his father was a carpenter; and that must have meant a great deal to him. I could wish him nothing better than the delight I had among the sweet-smelling chips and shavings of the carpenter shop in which I revelled

when a boy. Then, as we know, he liked to play at weddings and funerals: "We have piped unto you, and you have not danced," etc. And on that steep Nazareth hillside there must have been every facility for making dams and waterfalls and such things. It is in one of the apocryphal Gospels that we read about his making sparrows out of mud, but there are many things in the canonical books that are less credible. And the possibilities of mud are simply infinite. Now whither tends all this if not to the conclusion that a boy's life does not consist in the abundance of the mechanical toys that he possesses, but in his imaginative use of the rude materials of his environment? We have all of us seen children so buried under the piled mountain of their toys that, as John Weiss would have put it, "hardly a gesture transpired." The Greek *naught in overplus* clearly has some application here. Too often we discourage the imagination of the child with the abundance of our gifts. But, happily, the genius of childhood is selective, and from what is negligible takes after its kind. When this god would ride, anything serves him for a chariot. The preferences of children are sometimes disappointing to the parents who have been lavish in the hope to please or to surprise, but in such things "the child upon the judgment-seat" is often wiser than the most mature.

One Prayer.

Let me work and be glad,
O Lord, and I ask no more;
With will to turn where the sunbeams burn
At the sill of my workshop door.

Aforetime I prayed my prayer
For the glory and gain of earth,
But now grown wise and with opened eyes
I have seen what the prayer was worth.

Give me my work to do,
And peace of the task well done;
Youth of the spring and its blossoming,
And the light of the moon and sun.

Pleasure of little things
That never may pall or end,
And fast in my hold no lesser gold
Than the honest hand of a friend.

Let me forget in time
Folly of dreams that I had;
Give me my share of a world most fair,—
Let me work and be glad.

THEODOSIA GARRISON.

Pantomime and Christmas Pieces.

The desire to escape out of this work-day world into Fairyland is one which seems by no means to decline or become less universal as time goes by. Children in these days are taught in their nurseries more science than their grandfathers ever knew, and by the time they have been a couple of years in the school-room they are ready to laugh at the old "Joyce's Dialogues" and "Walker's Lectures"—one lecture to each of nine sciences—which were supposed sufficient for the instruction of an age nearly innocent of the "'ologies." Little boys in knickerbockers, and girls in short frocks, who have listened to Professors at the Royal Institution, and who know "all about" electro-magnetism, even if they have not been introduced to the Theory of Atoms, ought, some would think, to be superior to the attraction of beholding "all the trees in the garden," where Cinderella is dancing, "turn into clocks," or Jack climb the Beanstalk into a delightful place entirely unrecognised in any modern treatise on Astronomy. Nevertheless, they are far from having any such pretensions. Pantomimes and spectacular pieces do not fall off in popularity in the ratio in which the infant brain acquires a general confidence in the immutability of the order of Nature. On the contrary, the more we know of gravitation the more gratifying it obviously becomes to see a young woman reposing upon nothing half-way between the stage and the ceiling; and a slight knowledge of zoology enhances our ecstacy at beholding a dragon uniting every incompatible characteristic of the *Reptilia, Batrachia,* and *Raptores.* It is all very well for Mr. Tennyson to talk of

"Nourishing a youth sublime
With the fairy tales of Science and the last
results of Time."

The simple fact is, that Science may tell what wonders she pleases, but the mere fact that *she* tells them leads the juvenile mind to associate them with prose and boredom, like the jam perpetually proffered in combination with medicine; and the healthful appetite of Imagination indignantly refuses to be so nourished. "I want something that isn't true exactly, but that I can make believe is true, you know, mamma," is the psychological expression of the infant, yearly addressed to

Mrs. Trimmer, when she fondly imagines that Miss Edgeworth's Harry and Lucy—those intolerable little precocious prigs!—will be represented to future ages by her hopeful young ones, Tommy and Kitty. Of course, when "lessons" are actually going on any bit of "useful knowledge" which can also be made "entertaining" is thankfully received.

"As streams in deserts found seem sweet,
All brackish though they be."

But when school hours are over, to be pestered with facts, and expect to be amused with figures, is more than the youthful soul can endure without remonstrance. As one damsel, similarly invited to interest herself in the immense dimensions of the heavens, indignantly replied, "I don't care a pin about the heavens—I suppose there are people paid to attend to the solar system?" What the child instinctively craves is food of another sort—a certain saccharine matter which has its own rightful share in the nourishment of the brain, and for which no good substitute can be found.

If we were seriously asked what we should consider to be the most fatal defect in the education of a child, we should say—next, of course, to the lack of the spirit of love and reverence—that the worst deficiency was that of the Imagination. The Intellect can be developed in later years, the Memory stored, the logical Understanding trained to accurate work; but if the bright powers of Fancy and Imagination be quenched in childhood by the dull, dead, unmitigated pressure of a load of dreary facts, the spring of all that is to adorn and glorify life is dried up. Nature gives to every child more or less imagination. As soon as it begins to crawl, it idealises its battered and eyeless old doll into a lovely lady, and its squeaking woolly dog into an affectionate animal. The people who surround it, the furniture of its nursery, the trees it sees in the garden, are all transformed, in its little mind, into objects of love, terror, or devouring curiosity. The first idea of play with its companion is already a Pantomime; a coach and horses made of sofas and chairs; a game at Shop or School, or at "Hunt the Hare." As soon as it begins to read, it is some fairy tale or legend old on which it fastens, just as it would pick a strawberry off a table loaded with solid meat and artificial sweets. Yet everything, be it remembered, is equally new to the happy little mind. History is as fresh as Fable; and Science has wonders quite as sensational as any in the "Arabian Nights." Nay, our Nineteenth Century babe has even got expounders of such science and history, like Canon Kingsley and Mr. Cox, who tell the truth far better than anybody—unless it be Hans Christian Andersen—can tell fiction. But it is *not* the truth that any healthfully-constituted child snatches at for its earliest literary meal. Just as we are told that in all circulating libraries opened for the first time in backward places, the readers, for a year or two, ask for little beside novels, and only by degrees begin to require poetry and biography, history and science, so the child always commences by gloating over pure, unadulterated fiction containing the maximum of fancy and the minimum of reason, or even morality. There is Little Riding Hood, for example, the next step beyond Little Bo-Peep, whose somewhat disconnected legend is probably commended to the baby intelligence by the charms of music and poetry. What wholesomely-minded child has not shivered with delicious terror (each time the story is told more delicious than before) at the catastrophe when the wolf devours that harmless little girl? A step still further, and Tom Thumb calls out the first literary laugh at the delightful idea of being swallowed by a cow. Blue Beard causes the small heart to stand still with awe while Sister Anne watches for the expected rescue; Jack the Giant Killer affords a Carlylian sense of the glory of sheer mental power over ogrish strength; and the White Cat, and Beauty and the Beast, and Cinderella, each in its own way feeds the appetite, not merely for the miraculous, but for the playful, the grotesque, the purely fanciful. Not vainly has "the supreme Caucasian mind" carried most of these stories—as Max Muller tells us—through all the migrations of our Aryan race across Asia and Europe since the dawn of history. With slight variations, suited to age and climate, millions of children have had their young imaginations healthily stimulated by the tales of Cinderella and Llewellyn's Dog since the real *Jeuventus Mundi*, long before Homer sang, and when the ancestors of Greek, and Hindoo, and Englishman dwelt yet as one family in the old Bactrian Home. And, without them, where would the imagination of our children even now find food, or how should they develop into the

whole-souled men and women with no such sentiment? The human being who has no imagination, not only misses some of the sweetest and most refined pleasures of life, but, by the hypothesis, lacks the power of sympathy. He cannot "imagine" what another suffers or enjoys. Therefore inevitably he is a hard and an unfeeling man. F. P. COBBE.

Sunday School Lessons.

I.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

(Luke 11. 1-20.)

LESSON TEXT.—"Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins."—*Matt. 1. 21.*

To you this night is born a child
Of Mary, chosen mother mild.
This little child of lowly birth
Shall be the joy of all the earth.

MARTIN LUTHER.

I. THE NARRATIVE.

The record as given to us in Luke and Matthew (these things are not mentioned in Mark and John) says that the birth of Jesus was foretold in marvellous ways. There lived in Nazareth a Carpenter named Joseph, with his young wife, Mary. Compelled to make a journey to Bethlehem in order to be registered and taxed, they tried to find lodgings at one of the inns; but, everything being full, they were obliged to take refuge in a stable, which likely enough was an underground place, dug out of a hill. There Jesus was born. We are further told that shepherds, watching their flocks that night, heard angels singing in the sky, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men." It is also stated that some days after, "Wise Men" from the East, led by a star, brought gifts for Jesus.

II. THE SOURCES.

In the New Testament there are four biographies, so to say, of Jesus They were written many years after his death, perhaps in this order,—Mark, Luke, Matthew, and John. Jesus did not write anything, and we have no proof that what he said was taken down at the time, but after he had gone his teachings were remembered and used orally; but this would not do, and so, finally, the Gospels were written. Many other narratives were in existence. Some of them have been destroyed, and others are in what is called the "Apocrypha" to the New Testament, being writings which, it was decided, were not good enough to be put into the Canon. These accounts were written in Greek.

III. THE FACTS.

Reverent study has compelled us to think that possibly the actual facts were somewhat different from the beautiful narration in Luke and Matthew. It is probable that Jeses was born in Nazareth, which was the home of his parents. Jesus is almost always spoken of as from Nazareth. He had four brothers,—James, Joses, Simon, and Judas; and several sisters (Matthew xiii. 55-56). In one sense, it is of very little consequence whether we say that Nazareth or Bethlehem was the birthplace of Jesus. These are matters which seem of great importance to critics; but, settle it one way or the other, it does not affect the mission or power of the work which Jesus did. There seems to be some difficulty in finding proof that there was a taxing as described at the time in history we are now dwelling upon. Therefore, it is argued that the parents of Jesus did not go to Bethlehem. It is also argued that the Messianic expectations of the Jews always looked toward Bethlehem as the birthplace of the coming leader; and, therefore, it was naturally stated that Jesus was born there because he should have been. Criticism is chiefly concerned with explanation of the form, a scrutiny which involves comparison. All the time the sun of facts shines steadily through the shifting interpretations. All sects and all nations view Jesus as the Founder of Christianity. Of this there is no gainsaying, whatever rank may be assigned to him Probably the picture of the Bethlehem birth, the angels' song, the Magi, will never be removed from the thought of Christendom, whatever historical criticism may accomplish. Nazareth was a little village on a hill of Galilee, a place not mentioned by any leading authors. It is not easy to decide the date when Jesus was born. The Christian world now accepts the calendar which has been used so long. Christmas is the great holiday celebrating this event. There are some reasons for believing that Jesus was born a few years earlier than the date commonly accepted.

IV. A LOOK BACKWARD.

There are always two ways of looking at the advent of Jesus, or, as the Church calls it, "The Nativity." First, by accepting all the passages in the Old Testament which relate to the coming of a Messiah as referring to the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. The other view is to think of the Jewish people as the religious nation of history. In this wonderful race was the possibility of the greatest religious teacher and guide for the world. This latter way is ours, and it does not take away from the greatness of the event. The spirit of the Old Testament was beginning to break the letter. The sayings of Isaiah were becoming dearer and dearer to the people. Israel was looking for her deliverer. Great changes were expected, battles and wonderful commotions. It is true that Jesus did not come as the common people expected; but there can be traced the preparation for this, the great event of the ages, through the ripening history of this exceptionally religious people.

V. CLASS TALKS.

What is a Legend? What is a Myth? Do we find both in all religions? What is the meaning of the name "Jesus?" Does the critical view of the Gospels take away from their value? Is reverence lessened or increased by criticism and truthfinding? What is Madonna-worship? Why is Christmas becoming sueh a great festival? What lesson can be drawn from the fact of the lowly birth?

VI. LESSON TOPICS AND REVIEW.

I. Place and time of Jesus' birth.
II. Names of father and mother.

III. The biographies.
IV. The Canon.
V. The beautiful meaning of the angels' song and the Magi.
VI. What are the Apocrypha?
VII. The Hebrews a religious people.

VII. SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS AND REFERENCES.

Aim at a positive, reverent result in all class discussions. Do not let the scholars dwell on small contradictions and petty questions. Show how, as the herald of a universal religion, Jesus is to be judged by the life and truths he afterward gave rather than by the accuracy or falsity of the wonderful stories of his birth. Gannett's "The Childhood of Jesus," Part II., is of great "hinting" help in this lesson. "The Bible for Learners" (vol. iii), and Keim's "Jesus of Nazara" (vol. ii.) are critical and realistic. Geikie's and Farrar's "Lives of Christ" are rich in pictorial description, shaped by a Trinitarian theology. For contant aid turn always to Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."

E. A. HORTON.

Guild Notes.

We once visited a Guild in the North for the purpose of explaining the work of the Union, when the question was asked, "What shall we get by joining the Union?" We ventured to observe that no one had grasped the Guild idea whose first question was "What shall we *get?*" The first question should rather be "What can we give?" And yet, if one does ask about getting, the answer is simple—"You get the opportunity for larger service, and if you really believe that it is more blessed to give than to receive, you will never ask about getting again." There are many feeble guilds in our midst; there are places where no guild yet exists, but where conditions are suitable for founding one. It is the support in money, service, and ideas, that makes possible the progress of the Guild movement. This is what you "get" out of working together in the Guild Union.

Our Guild friends will be interested to know that next year we intend publishing each month notes for a Guild subject, suggested by some well-known poem. These notes will be contributed by various ministers, and it is hoped they may be found useful, especially by young people who are beginning to give addresses.

The following items of news relating to American Guilds, and taken from the monthly publication of the American Union, will be found suggestive:—

Dorchester, Mass. (Nathaniel Hall Society).—We gave dinners at Thanksgiving to fourteen deserving poor families. At Christmas we gave five dollars to the Morgan Memorial to help their entertainment for the children. We give annually twenty-five dollars to the Young People's Religious Union. Although at present we have no regular outside work we are always ready to lend a hand.

Charleston, S. C.— . . This year we have taken upon ourselves the opening of a Free Library. . .

Watertown, Mass.— . . . We hold meetings twice a month and this year we have tried the plan of having four papers at each meeting instead of one. This has added more interest to the meetings." . .

A "PENNY PARTY."

One of our Unions very kindly sent in this plan for a "Penny Party." All such suggestions are very welcome, and we should be glad if every Union that had a successful entertainment of any kind would send us an account.

Send out little silk pockets with the invitations, and enclose the following verse:—

"For the Admission Fee we kindly request that you would

For every letter in your name
A penny take, and cast the same
Within this little pocket.
And if you would be very nice
Go through this operation twice,
Then quickly shut and lock it"

MANSFORD STREET GUILD.—The fourth report of the transactions of this Guild will be read with interest. "The average attendance at the nine devotional meetings was 22, but the membership at the closing meeting had risen to 52, as against a membership of 31, at the corresponding period last year. Almost all of the meetings have been characterised by a bright and healthy vigour, and a right spirit. The papers and addresses have been of a very varied nature, but all were thoughtful and stimulating. The only need has been that more friends should have shared their thoughts with their fellow members. The responsibility for the floral decorations of the church continues to be well met. The habit of distributing the flowers among sick members is quite in accordance with the principles of our Guild, and it is good to see that this is being done with more and more discrimination. It is gratifying to note that we have secured a First Prize in the recent Prize Essay Competition This success should prompt us to turn more collectively to some simple but serious study that would fit us still further to grasp and appreciate the noble thought and high endeavour which beset us on every hand. A new feature of this year's work has been the admirable entertainment given to our blind friends on January 25th. Another gain has been the long-wished-for Service of Recognition and Welcome to new members. Much of our activity, and most of its success has been due to the Warden, the Rev. John Ellis, and

for his and Mrs. Ellis's removal, through the latter's ill-health, just pain and sorrow is felt. It but remains to urge that we use our opportunities to the full, while yet they are with us. The motto of our Guild—'Not failure, but low aim, is crime'—should still ring in our ears, for it is ever true that 'a man's reach should be higher than his grasp, or what's a heaven for?'"

News from the Field.

The *Rev. J. M. Whiteman* has entered upon his work at *Burnley*, where he will find ample scope for all his powers, and the *Rev. W. G. Price* has begun his ministry at *Stalybridge*. He succeeds *Mr. Harrison*, who has served the congregation with great fidelity and acceptance for many years past.

The *Rev. John Ellis* has been receiving welcome in different parts of his extensive field of work in *Yorkshire*. At *Elland* he had warm greetings, and in other places his return to *Yorkshire* has been celebrated with pleasure. As Missionary for the Yorkshire Union he is sure to make his mark.

The *Rev J. M. Connell* has resigned his position at *Exeter*, as assistant to the venerable *T. W. Chignell*. The resignation takes effect in March, 1905.

It is pleasing to note the affection shewn at *Liverpool* by the friends of the Domestic Mission towards the two devoted missionarihs, the *Revs. T. Lloyd Jones* and *Joseph Anderton*. Presentations have been made to both of them, and words of warm appreciation and love were spoken about them. They are a goodly and devoted couple of earnest souls, whose joy is found in blessing the poor and sorrowful among whom they live and work. These proofs of affection will cheer and strengthen their hearts.

At the close of *Mr. Farrington's* protracted ministry in the *United States* and in *England*, the congregation and friends at *Richmond* have made presentations to him and his wife. They have both been good and capable workers, who, by their great ability and deep consecration, have written a fine record in the hearts of many of their fellow-creatures.

It is a matter of regret that the friends of the Mission at *Croydon* are not able, for financial reason, to continue the services of their hard-working Missionary, *Mr. Bullock*. He and his good wife had worked at the Mission from its beginning, and both of them exercised a refining and tender influence among the poor folk to whom they ministered. Good friends and great workers like *Mr. Green* and *Mrs. Grover* have recently passed away, and it is a difficult task to find suitable successors. But, very soon it is hoped, better days will dawn for the Mission. *Mr. Jupp* is sure to do his very best to bring about such a result.

The *British and Foreign Unitarian Association* has been welcoming its new President, the *Right Hon. W. Kenrick*, and recounting the work it has been doing throughout the country. In the new president the Unitarians of the country will find a wise and capable leader, who will faithfully perform the manifold duties of his high office. It is interesting to see the father presiding over our great national organisation, and the son, *Mr. W. B. Kenrick*, presiding over the *Midland Christian Union*. Old and honoured names still cling to our churches and our work, and the lustre is great both to them and to our churches. Among these honoured names that of *Kenrick* stands very high. The *Association* has a good record of work in the past, but it is bracing up its energies for larger work still in the future. The country will soon ring with its activities.

The *London and South Eastern Counties' Provincial Assembly* has been holding a successful meeting, and has sent its ministers and members with renewed heart and hope back to their places in the vineyard. This is as it should be.

So also the *Yorkshire* congregations have been gathering into line welcoming their new Superintendent Missionary, and laying out their plans for an earnest campaign in the approaching winter.

A stir of life has been seen in the *North Lancashire and Westmoreland Association*. Their meeting at *Preston* gave signs of earnest life and vigour.

The *Home Missionary College* continues its vigorous propagandism on behalf of the great fund it has determined to raise. The meetings in *London* and *Belfast* were well attended and brought forth good fruit for the College.

The time is close at hand when the *East Cheshire Union* and the *Midland Christian Union* are to make their great effort, each to secure a Missionary Fund of £5000. So many good friends are interested and working zealously that it does not seem rash to prophesy that both appeals will prove successful.

The *London District Association* is even more ambitious. It is asking for £7500, and the opening subscsiption list gives promise that it will obtain what it wants.

Our good wishes are with all these efforts.

The *Temperance Cause* is winning its way among our congregations. The central organisation in *London* is not supported so generously as it might be, but there is a far greater work going on in scattered places among our people than is chronicled by any organisation. The cause is so great and the call to work for it is so urgent that moral and spiritual agencies like ours cannot fail to respond. In *Belfast* the *Non-Subscribing Association* make temperance one of their special fields of work.

The Harvest services throughout the country are over. They have been well attended and greatly enjoyed, and doubtless have stirred up religious life and thankfulness everywhere.

The Great Messenger has been among our friends as usual, and taken from our midst honoured and beloved friends. Venerable fellow-worshippers, whose lives have been gracious and helpful, have passed on into the higher life and left us to follow in their steps. Among these are *Mrs. Shilson*, of *Tavistock*, aged 88; *Mr. A. Barrett Midlane*, of *Brixton*, aged 71; *Mr. T. Gladstone*, of *Birmingham*, aged 84; and the honoured and beloved widow of *H. W. Crosskey*, aged 78. Blessings on their memory. They have entered upon "The joy of their Lord."

SCRUTATOR.

November 18th, 1904

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